RUSSIA WITHOUT STALIN
– An Editorial

THE

Commonweal

Murder of a Village

by Robert Barrat

THE EX-COMMUNISTS

by Hannah Arendt

Volume LVII, Number 24 March 20, 1953 Twenty Cent

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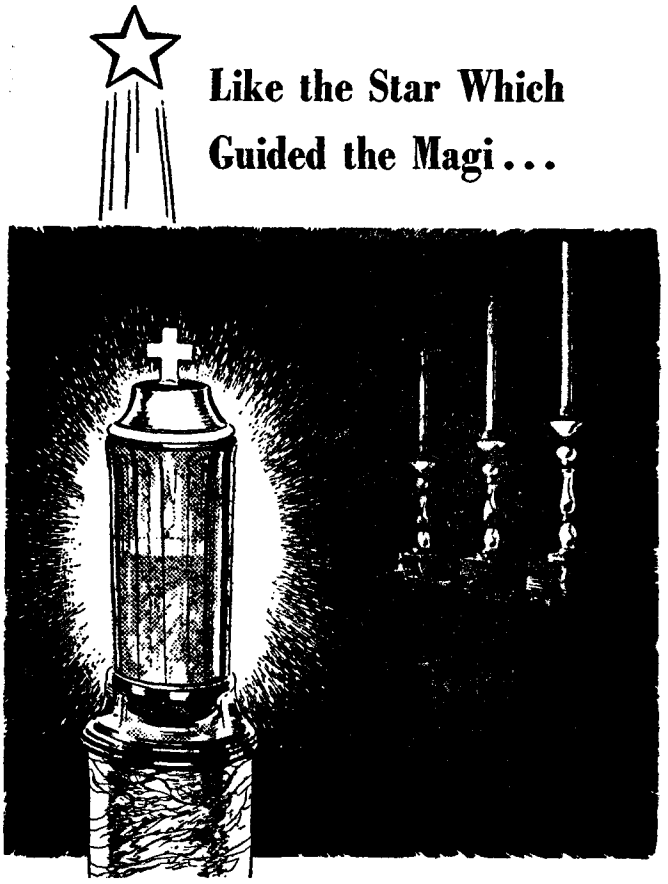

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THE COMMONWEAL
386 FOURTH AVENUE
NEW YORK 16

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Published weekly, printed and copyrighted 1953, in the U. S. A. by The Commonweal Publishing Co., Inc., 386 Fourth Ave., New York 16, N. Y., MUrray Hill 3-9685. Entered as second-class matter, February 9, 1934, at the post office at New York, N. Y., under the act of March 3, 1879. U. S. and Canada, $7 a year. Foreign $8. Single copies, 20c.

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THE Commonweal

week by week

RUSSIA WITHOUT STALIN

THE long-awaited day has come. Stalin is dead. The Soviet Union is in the hands of his successors. Immediately, it seems to make little difference. Premier Malenkov reaffirms Russia's peaceful intentions along with her military strength and determination not to back down. Mr. Beria and Mr. Molotov also deliver funeral orations which reiterate the Soviet Union's recent political line. The cold war, and the hot wars, will go on.

The Russian State itself will undergo certain minor changes. Mr. Malenkov has decreed some organizational streamlining; he is also bringing in some younger personnel. To all appearances, harmony permeates the new hierarchy from the new ten-man presidium downward. Unity and loyalty to Stalin's principles are proclaimed on every hand. As far as power goes, however, the Soviet Union is something less than what it was under Joseph Stalin. Only in this sense have the hopes of the West found realization in his sudden passing. And even then his death may have heightened the dangers of a major war with Russia.

Obviously the Soviet Union is weaker without Stalin's immense national and world-wide personal prestige. Mao of China has become the leading Communist. The aura of veneration which surrounded Stalin in the past decade does not envelop his successors in the USSR who proclaim their direct descent from Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin.

Malenkov, Beria and Molotov—all of them tough and implacable foes of the West—hardly qualify as embodiments of the cause of the downtrodden of the world; they merely carry on a program drawn up and set in motion by others. They are bureaucrats who have risen far, yet without the ability to capture the popular imagination—unless to inspire fear because of their roles in Stalin's major purges.

Stalin's death—as his policies in the last years of his life—appears, moreover, to have spurred on the cause of European unity, a new watchfulness on the part of the United States and anti-Communist alliances generally. Will this renewed determination be able to hold for long against another Moscow "peace" offensive?

With each passing day, the chances of internal upheaval appear to lie more in the indefinite future than in the immediate present. The Soviet Union's leaders give the impression that they are animated right now more by fears for national unity than by personal ambition. The showdown as to Stalin's real successor is yet to come. And if history provides few, if any, instances of one all-powerful dictator's being peacefully succeeded by another, it must also be recognized that the Soviet monolith is itself a unique political achievement. It is an edifice that will hardly fall apart in a day.

AMONG the personnel of the new ruling Soviet hierarchy it is impossible to discover one friend of the United States. Mr. Malenkov's predilection for further expansion in the East may, however, augur less tension for Western Europe. The prospect for China is unclear. Mao's prestige in the world of Communism, and as acknowledged leader of Asia's native Communists, must be balanced against China's industrial backwardness and her dependence on Russia for military equipment.

With both the United States and the Soviet Union intensifying psychological warfare in the Orient there would be new dangers and new opportunities. Pressure should therefore increase for a Point Four program wholehearted and extensive enough to relieve basic livelihood deficiencies in the next few years—although to do so, much lethargy here and in the Far East would have to be overcome. Private agencies and missionaries, backed by the generosity of individuals back in the States, are challenged now to redouble their efforts. There is nothing quite so telling as the power of example.

These are days when the United States and the United Nations must stand firm. It is of key importance to convince the new Soviet government that there is no chance of appeasement. This must likewise be made clear among all the satellites. Yet

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it is hardly the moment for dramatic new moves aimed at ruthless leaders who are uneasy and uncertain under the weight of their new responsibilities. The President's formula of watchful vigilance will have to do for the present. The full impact of Stalin's passing on the Soviet empire will hardly be discernible for many months.

THE OTHER TAFT

SENATOR Robert A. Taft has always exercised a certain special fascination for political writers, partly because it is never easy to predict what he will do in any given situation. Among professional politicians, Taft has long been known as Mr. Republican. Yet under certain circumstances, he has the habit of drawing conclusions highly unsatisfactory to his Republican co-workers. Thus on one occasion when he faced up to hard facts and wrote a bill calling for a large amount of public housing, his colleague, Senator Bricker, was reported to have muttered darkly that the Socialists had at last "got to" Bob Taft.

Mr. Republican or no, Senator Taft has sometimes acted more like an amateur than a pro. Like certain athletes who tighten up at crucial moments, Taft has always displayed a strong tendency to try too hard. Thus he never had less chance of winning the Presidential nomination than when he was doing his utmost to get it.

At such periods, Taft's hold on reality grows more and more shaky, and many of his public statements sound as if they relate, not to the real world everyone else knows, but to some fictional world familiar only to Senator Bricker and others of the more hard-shelled GOP camp. Unfortunately for Senator Taft, these gentlemen, although vocal, command relatively few votes and when it comes to the Presidency, Senator Taft ends up "often a bridesmaid, never the bride."

Thus in displaying now certain definite qualities of responsibility and judgment, Senator Taft is probably only running true to form. Having lost the prize he coveted, he is currently following a course which, had he pursued it earlier, could conceivably have won for him the nomination he coveted. And this is Senator Taft's tragedy. Most politicians are infinitely more attractive as campaigners than as office-holders; Taft in office is nowhere near as worrisome as Taft the campaigner.

In any case, President Eisenhower and the nation as a whole should be grateful to Senator Taft for his conduct to date as majority leader in the Senate. After one outburst over the appointment of Martin Durkin as Secretary of Labor, Taft has largely succeeded in keeping the Old Guard in check and has served President Eisenhower well.

As always, Taft continues unpredictable. His great weakness is still in the field of foreign affairs and may be traced to his conviction, which he holds in spite of the Soviet threat, that the greatest danger to our national security lies in excessive government spending. As a result, a time may come, and in the near future, when he will break with President Eisenhower over foreign policy. But in the meantime it is not amiss to express appreciation for the qualities Senator Taft displays when he is not trying to be more—or less—than a Senator.

NEXT WEEK

WALDEMAR GURIAN writes about Stalin's life and death as Soviet leader.

"The strength of the Stalin myth ought not to be underestimated. Stalin will continue to attract the mass mind as a son of the people, as a man who rose from the lower depths to a dominant position of master of eight hundred millions. The combination of impersonal calculation and ruthless brutality will attract many who hate the existing order and seek a simple way out. Nothing is as popular as success. His ability to settle disputes by cunning and brutal decision will be sorely missed if conflicts arise among his successors. I do not believe that the influence of his evil genius will disappear with his death."

A COURAGEOUS DECISION

IN the crisis of our generation it became clear that some Americans had deliberately betrayed their country. Whether their betrayal resulted from misdirected idealism or malice was, from a legal point of view, of no matter. Their guilt was real, and it called for punishment. And so Alger Hiss was found out and imprisoned and the Rosenbergs are soon to be executed.

But every age of crisis exacts its toll of propitiatory human sacrifices, and the danger is that after the guilty have been apprehended and rightfully punished the popular desire for victims will be increased rather than quieted. First it is the blood of the criminal which is asked, but then it is the blood of his associates, and then the blood of the merely foolish—and finally, if the process goes unchecked, the blood of the just is demanded, too.

It seems, in view of Secretary of State Dulles' recent decision, that John Carter Vincent came

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dangerously close to being sacrificed in such a process. Opinion demanded that other Alger Hisses be found and punished, and John Carter Vincent was marked "it." Louis Budenz gave sworn testimony that Mr. Vincent was a member of the Communist Party and had willfully subverted United States interests in China. Mr. Vincent denied this charge and was twice cleared by Loyalty Review Boards, but the clamor for his blood continued.

Senators McCarthy and McCarran, the chief clamorers in this and similar cases, insisted that belief in Mr. Vincent's guilt was an article of pure American faith. Later, a third Board reversed the previous decisions and, by a divided vote, found that there existed a reasonable basis for the belief that Mr. Vincent was a poor security risk.

But Mr. Dulles, after a careful review of the evidence, has overruled the adverse decision. The worst that can be said of Mr. Vincent, according to the Secretary of State, is that his past judgment had fallen short of the Department's "high standards." He is consequently to be retired honorably, with full pension.

Mr. Dulles has made a courageous decision. He must know what consequences it may hold for him: the executioners will not lose one victim without quickly seeking a substitute, and he who denied them the first is an obvious choice.

By risking this (and in the present climate of American politics it is a real risk), Mr. Dulles has done more than save one diplomat from apparent slander. By reaching a decision on the basis of the facts as he honestly sees them, unintimidated by the howls beneath his window, he has saved his country from a new capitulation to irrationality and fear. To call foolishness foolishness, refusing it the name and punishment of treason even though there is a chance that future evidence may prove one wrong, is no small accomplishment at this hour in our history, and it is no small patriotic service either.

WO NSO DAE

ON its thirtieth anniversary, *Time* quoted the Twi-speaking peoples of West Africa: *Se wotiri twa a, wo nso dae;* translated, "When the head is knocked off, that is the end of all dreaming." And that was *Time's* conclusion after a four-page exploration of the history of Western thought as it bears on the politics of 1953.

Time argues on the side of a politico-philosophical realism, which it sees gaining influence in American intellectual and political circles these days, replacing the illusionary "Gnosticism" which was voted out of office last November.

By "Gnosticism," *Time* means the belief that paradise can exist within history. Their theory is that of Eric Voegelin, author of *The New Science of Politics,* and *Time* traces the Gnostic state of mind from Joachim of Flora (1132-1202) to Acheson of Foggy Bottom (1893-).

Briefly stated, this is the theory: Those who believe in an earthly paradise will, if they are inclined towards totalitarianism, try to force the paradise into existence, and produce a Soviet Union en route. If they are democrats (or, more likely, Democrats), they will meet problems with impractical plans, absurd hopes and moralistic pronouncements, in place of practical actions. In 1938-39, instead of sending troops against Hitler, they proclaimed moral condemnation.

Time accuses the Democratic Administrations, and liberal thought in general, of Gnosticism. It claims that China and Eastern Europe were lost because the Gnostics were in power. It lays the present East-West deadlock at the feet of the Gnostics. And on the positive side, *Time* rejoices that now the Republicans, anti-Gnostics from 'way back, are in office. It recommends a re-statement of the "American Proposition" based on the "Second American Revolution"—the newly-evolved industrial-capitalism of the United States.

We find this theory extremely interesting. We first read its political statement in *American Diplomacy 1900-1950,* by George F. Kennan, director of the State Department Policy Planning Staff under Dean Acheson. His book protests "our failure [in diplomacy] to see clearly, or to take into account, the realities of the world around us."

At the risk of being tiresome about the campaign, we suggest that *Time's* Gnostic theory fits what happened last November admirably. One man asked for patience and offered no sure cures. The other said that he would go to Korea, and thereby won the Gnostic vote.

More could be said, but this should be enough to indicate that Mr. Luce has a double-edged theory here. There are dreamers and there are realists in both parties. The liberal tradition can legitimately be accused of preoccupation with dream-goals. But surely conservative political thought, as exemplified in the Republican party, cannot in the wildest Gnostic fancy be said to have offered sober and realistic alternatives to the Democratic foreign policy of 1945-52. The Republicans' problem then was the same as *Time's* today. They were often more interested in making points against the opposition than in the realities of the crisis. That is not as grandiose a dream as the Gnostic one, but it is just as likely to be ended by the loss of all our heads. We don't know how to say that in Twi.

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NEED FOR LIGHT

NOT long ago I had the opportunity to meet with a small group of business and professional men who gather informally to discuss questions of the hour. A high percentage of the group are professors at two well-known Eastern colleges. Most of them are non-Catholics. The evening I was invited to their dinner-meeting the topic under discussion was "Catholicism and American Freedom."

A Protestant historian got things under way. An urbane, soft-spoken fellow, he was clearly uncomfortable. "I should much prefer to talk about the religious roots of American democracy rather than offer criticism of another religious group," he began. He went on then to say why he and others like him were "disturbed" about Catholicism, confining himself mainly to quotations from the writings of Pope Leo XIII on free speech, a free press, the separation of Church and State, etc. Then he compared these papal doctrines with the Declaration of Independence. Strangely enough for a historian, he did not place the papal writings in their historical framework but let them stand in their naked literalness. Taken that way, they sound harsh and wholly alien to American ears.

"Now, gentlemen," he concluded, "here you have Catholic teaching from its highest source. I leave it to you whether or not it can be reconciled with what you and I understand as American democracy. I do not mean to say, or even suggest, that American Catholics are disloyal. But the question is—if Catholicism were to become the majority religion in this country, would the Church demand special privileges; would the religious and political liberty of the rest of us be drastically limited, as these documents seem to say that it should be?"

So the big question of the evening—rather than specific instances of censorship, parochial schools, medical ethics, etc., such as were anticipated—was the theoretical question of what would happen were America to become overwhelmingly Catholic.

Now this, I know, is an involved and highly complex matter, not to be solved in a short magazine piece. But it is important, I think, that on the question one of three things should soon be done: 1) it should be made clear to non-Catholic United States that the American system is acceptable, not merely until such a time as Catholics are numerous and strong enough to change it but good under all circumstances, or 2) it should be stated candidly that a Catholic America would not be the America we have known—at least as far as these particular civil liberties go, or 3) it should be emphasized that the matter is not settled: there are theologians on both sides and neither side speaks with full authority.

Any one of these courses would clear the air somewhat.

In the first case, the "disturbed" non-Catholic might be convinced the American experiment is unique, papal condemnations of existing former systems of Church-State separation do not apply univocally to this country. In the second, a clear avowal of what is not now unmistakably stated but inferentially defended in certain carefully-watched theological journals would at least have the appeal of frankness. Catholics would lose a certain advantage but, I think, would be respected for honesty. In the third, those Catholics who believe in, and support, the present system as not only an arrangement but a defensible theory would at least have the assurance of knowing that their side in a controversy was not burdened with the suggestions of heresy, which are now frequent.

At the friendly, informal meeting I attended the same thing happened that renders Paul Blanshard's books useless as a serious investigation of Catholicism and American Democracy. Many of the critics of Catholicism were actually spokesmen for secularism. I mean secularism not as drawing a clear line of distinction between secular and spiritual authority but as a full-blown philosophy of life compounded of religious indifferentism, moral relativism and genteel statism. They apparently conceived of American democracy as the very incarnation of this philosophy—for instance, they thought the Church is out of order when it enunciates moral principles that will have political consequences, because people disagree about what is moral. Thus the fact that Catholics vote against birth-control information in Massachusetts is somehow a denial of democracy. Apparently Massachusetts Catholics should not vote according to their consciences, or at least there shouldn't be so many of them that they can determine an election. Again, the fact that the Catholic Church considers itself the only true Church was deemed "undemocratic"—apparently the Church cannot conform to democracy until it declares that one religion is as good as another. Consistently, separation of Church and State was interpreted this way as the canonization of a secularist philosophy; belief in moral relativism was taken as a patriotic touchstone.

Catholics above any other group in this country can prevent such a perversion of the American idea. But until we make it unmistakably clear whether we accept the principle of Church-State separation as more than a temporary convenience for ourselves, our opportunities, I am afraid, are severely limited. Our own present situation is much too cloudy for others to turn to us seeking light.

JOHN COGLEY.

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The Ex-Communists

"YOUR AIM, TO MAKE OF DEMOCRACY A 'CAUSE' IN THE STRICT IDEOLOGICAL SENSE, CONTRADICTS THE RULES AND LAWS BY WHICH WE LIVE AND LET LIVE."

HANNAH ARENDT

THIS is about the role of ex-Communists, not former Communists. The line between them can theoretically be easily drawn and grasped. There are, not only in the United States but everywhere in the world, many people who at one time or another, and for the most varied reasons, belonged to a totalitarian movement, as party members, as fellow travelers, as sympathizers. Among them are people whose prominence in these parties was never due to their political importance, but who, because they had achieved prominence in some other field, lent prestige to the parties to which they belonged.

Picasso is not a prominent Communist; he is a great painter who happens to have fallen for Communism. His responsibility is in art; he loses his artistic integrity if he starts painting bad pictures for the sake of Communism, not if he begins to utter political opinions. If Picasso were to leave the Party tomorrow, he would become a former Communist, not an ex-Communist.

To this same category of former Communists belongs an altogether different group of people whose chief interest always was political. Communism played a decisive role in their lives. Their chief responsibility was engaged there and their prominence, as long as it lasted, was the result of political activities. Among their common characteristics is that they left the Party early; they were sufficiently informed to sense, if not to know articulately, the stages by which a revolutionary party developed into a full-fledged totalitarian movement, and they had their own criteria to judge this. These criteria may not appear sufficient in the light of what we know today; they were enough then. Important among them were the abolition of inner-party democracy, the liquidation of independence for the various national Communist parties and their total submission under the orders of Moscow. The Moscow Trials, which in many respects are the turning point in this whole history, concluded the process.

We are not interested here in the destinies of these people, and it would be hard, indeed, to find a common denominator for them after they left the Party. They disappeared into public and private life, as writers or journalists, or businessmen, and as members of all existing parties, from the so-called Right to the so-called Left. Many of them lost their interest in politics altogether. Decisive is that their Communist past remained an important biographical fact, but did not become the nucleus of their new opinions, viewpoints, *Weltanschauungen*. They neither looked for a substitute for a lost faith nor did they concentrate all their efforts and talents on the fight against Communism.

It is easy, perhaps all too easy, to construct a type of the ex-Communist. In order to avoid all misunderstandings, I shall choose in my considerations no product of my own imagination, but take as my model Whittaker Chambers, whom society at large, for the good reason of his articulateness and gifts as a writer, has accepted as the spokesman for the ex-Communists, and whom they themselves, it seems, have more or less recognized as their voice.

IT is easy to draw a theoretical line between ex-Communists and former Communists. In practice it has become complicated. The ex-Communists, though of course much smaller in number than former Communists, have become prominent on the strength of their past alone. Communism has remained the chief issue in their lives. They feel that their potential strength is much greater than their small number actually indicates because their past, on which they base present careers and ambitions, is shared by a much larger section of society. They work to persuade their former friends to join them: to make a confession, own up to a conversion and form a solid political group.

This puts former Communists to an obvious disadvantage: it looks as though they are less decent, less honest, less convinced of the dangers of Communism. Moreover, to have been a Communist, even at the age of seventeen, has become a great handicap under present circumstances. The temptation to join the ex-Communists is all the greater as the public humiliation of a spectacular confession is compensated by the advantage of an unbroken public career.

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Against the gesture of a conversion stands the fact that one can smoothly develop from a Communist politician into an expert in Communist politics. The admission of a broken personal life is compensated for by unbroken public prominence; the public humiliation spares one the private humiliations implied in having to change one's profession and being demoted from prominence to the average life of an average citizen.

At this moment, the ex-Communists still play their role chiefly as experts, called in by free society to help in the fight against totalitarianism because they are supposed to know best the means of the enemy and therefore are best qualified to design the means with which to counteract the enemy.

IN what does this knowledge, in their own opinion, consist? Chambers sums it up in the following sentence: "No one knows so well as the ex-Communists the character of the conflict, and of the enemy, or shares so deeply the same power of faith and willingness to stake his life on his beliefs . . . for that struggle cannot be fought, much less won, or even understood, except in terms of total sacrifice . . . ." Therefore—quoting Silone: "The final conflict will be between the Communists and the ex-Communists" . . . who have understood that "in our time, informing is a duty."

Let me briefly interpret this passage: like the Communists, the ex-Communists see the whole texture of our time in terms of one great dichotomy ending in a final battle. There is no plurality of forces in the world, there are only two. These two are not the opposition of freedom against tyranny (or however else one may want to formulate it in traditional terms), but of one faith against another. These two faiths, moreover, spring from the same source. The ex-Communists are not former Communists, they are Communists "turned upside down;" without their former Communism, they insist, nobody can understand what they are doing now. What they are doing concerns the central crisis of our time; this is really known only by two groups: the Communists themselves and the ex-Communists. Ultimately, others don't count; we are only bystanders in the great battle of history being fought out by these two protagonists. Surely, they need allies; but as the allies of the Communists are always led, in accordance with Communist theory and practice, by the superior knowledge of the Communist Party, so the ex-Communists offer to lead their anti-Communist allies by means of their superior wisdom. The same contempt which the Communists used to have for their supporters and allies, the ex-Communists announce for theirs.

Just as the Communists respect only their real opponents, so the ex-Communists show respect only for people who either have become ex-Communists or are still Communists. Since they have divided the world into two, they can account for the disturbing variety and plurality of the world we all live in only by either discounting it as irrelevant altogether or by stating that it is due to lack of consistency and character.

American liberalism, to take the outstanding example, has for decades been denounced by Communism as an inconsistent, inconsequential attitude in the service of the bourgeoisie (or capitalism or what not) and is now denounced by ex-Communists as the inconsistent, inconsequential ally of Communism. Anti-liberalism as attitude and chief idiosyncrasy has remained the same. The liberals were the (unconscious and therefore stupid or cowardly) helpers of capitalism; they now have become those who are too stupid or too cowardly to think their own tenets through and find that it naturally leads them into Communism.

INFORMING, which plays such a great role in Chambers' book, is a duty in a police state where people have been organized and split into two ever-changing categories: those who have the privilege to be the informers and those who are dominated by the fear of being informed upon. It is the old story: one cannot fight a dragon, we are told, without becoming a dragon; we can fight a society of informers only by becoming informers ourselves.

However, up to now this has always been regarded as the danger inherent in political life; we were warned lest we become dragons when we started to fight them; we were not told that we first had to be trained as dragons. The reason why the wisdom of the past never tried to solve one of the basic perplexities of politics in so plausible a manner as our ex-Communists propose is simple: if we became dragons ourselves, it would be of small interest which of the two dragons should eventually survive. The meaning of the fight would be lost.

The advice to use totalitarian means in order to fight totalitarianism is justified by the ex-Communists by pointing to the special historical circumstances. The end, we are told, justifies the means. You cannot make an omelet without breaking eggs. It is the end which commands the means.

Despite its obvious fallacy, the doctrine that the end justifies the means has a dangerous attraction for all of us because it is so deeply embedded in our whole tradition of political thought.

The *summum bonum,* the commonweal, the happiness of the greatest number, etc., have all been thought

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to be ends to be achieved by the appropriate political means. I personally hold no brief for these various political and theological doctrines; however, in one decisive respect they all differed from the new ideological ends of our new totalitarian politicians: they were not ends which men could immediately achieve and prove to exist in any tangible form.

The *summum bonum* which, according to St. Augustine, was the only good which I was permitted to enjoy for its own sake, while all the other goods I was asked to use only as means to an end, was not of this world; it could organize all other *bona,* put them into a certain hierarchy, become, in other words, the chief criterion, the standard of all actions and judgments; it could not be fabricated because it transcended all fabrication and all actions the way the yardstick "transcends" and, therefore, can measure all other concrete lengths. This is true for all the traditional concepts of the end of politics: the commonweal, the happiness of the great number, the good life, etc.—none of which are transcendent in the absolute sense of a *summum bonum.* Strictly speaking, they are not *political* ends. The categories of means and end are not applied within the field of human action, but human action itself is seen as a means to an end which transcends it.

The dangers which were always inherent in these theories became real only when the end of political action was conceived as political itself, as in the concept of a classless society or a race-society or whatever else the ideal or the cause might be.

If we insist on applying the category of means and end to action and human relationships, we shall see that everything comes to stand on its head. It is perfectly true that the end of making a table justifies the instruments and means, including killing the tree. But it is no less true that between men a good deed done for the sake of a bad cause eventually will make this world of human relationship somewhat better, improve it, while a bad deed for a good cause instantly makes our common world a little worse. If for the bad cause of making Communism more respectable a Communist would behave like a decent human being, the net effect would not be propaganda for Communism but a little decency. The reason why Communists so seldom indulge in good deeds for their bad cause is that they know this; they know that decency spread for a bad cause will ultimately only result in a more decent, and therefore stronger, society.

PLATO stated that it lies in the nature of action, *pragma,* to adhere less to truth than contemplation, *theoria.* The main shortcoming of action, it has been repeated time and again since, lies in the fact that I never quite know what I am doing. Thinking or making things, I know, or am supposed to know, exactly what I am doing. Whatever the result, nobody else can be held responsible for it. This is not true for action. Since I act in a web of relationships which consists of the actions and the desires of others, I never can foretell what ultimately will come out of what I am doing now. This is the reason why we can act politically but cannot "make history." The reason, on the other hand, that Communists and ex-Communists alike are so unsqueamish in their means is that they are quite convinced that they know what they are doing. They think of themselves as being the makers of history.

The confusion of political action with the making of history goes back to Marx. Marx hoped, after Hegel had interpreted the history of mankind, that he would be able to "change the world," that is to *make* mankind's future. Marxism could be developed into a totalitarian ideology because of its perversion, or misunderstanding of political action as the making of history.

The totalitarian element in Marxism is as little the concept of class or classless society as the concept of race or race-society, as such, is what made Nazism totalitarian. In both instances, the decisive element is the belief in history which teaches certain procedures by which one can bring about the end—and of course never does. The breaking of eggs in action never leads to anything more interesting than the breaking of eggs. The result is identical with the activity itself: it is a breaking, not an omelet.

A friend of mine, with whom I was discussing Chambers' book, observed that it was obvious that this fellow never was interested in politics. And indeed, the book tells us how little Chambers relished the political life of his party, how he looked down on it and escaped it into the inner apparatus where commands were given and obeyed, where history was made, behind the scenes of official Communist politics. And in this respect, Chambers has not changed.

When, in September 1939, he first went to Washington to warn the government of Soviet espionage, he felt that he had an historic mission, and was acting in a historic moment; it never occurred to him, what to the reader is obvious from his own report, that it was a mere coincidence that his interview took place at this particular moment. The appointment had been made several months earlier. So much does he feel himself to be an actor in the historical drama, that he actually persuaded himself that it was the Hitler-

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Stalin pact which inspired his act. He makes history, he does not simply act politically.

It is against these makers of history that a free society has to defend itself, regardless of the vision they harbor. And this involves more than the natural reaction which we instinctively feel against the arrogance of people who are engaged in so "sublime" a task. The idea that I can do more than act for, and in, the present, (i.e., that I can make the future), implies two fundamental errors. It implies that I know the end and therefore can decide freely about the means, and that I know what I am doing in action the way I know what I am doing in making things.

The first is impossible because I am mortal; I never shall know the end of history because I never shall see the end of it. The second is wrong because human action in its ultimate consequences is unpredictable by definition. The great tradition of Western political thought has always known this and interpreted it as a predicament. It is the reason why politics as a human activity was deemed (since Plato and Aristotle) to be inferior in quality to other forms of human activity. Politics was justified by the tradition, not in political terms, but as necessary for some higher form of life: the *bios theoreticos,* or undisturbed occupation with the salvation of one's soul.

No matter how doubtful these interpretations of the whole political realm of human life may appear to us today, one thing is certain: they preserved, together with a depreciation of political action, the awareness of its basic uncertainties.

IT is unfortunate, and perhaps symptomatic of the general situation of our present political thinking, that all proverbs and imagery that are plausible enough to strike home and appeal directly to common sense, are on the side of our history-makers, not on the side of free society. Propaganda successes of totalitarian-minded people are largely due to their use of such sayings as "you can't make an omelet without breaking eggs," "who said A must say B," "we must be united like one man against the common danger," etc. Against these stand only a few lonely utterances of great statesmen, out of the depth of their political experience and sometimes expressing its quintessential truth. None of them has as yet achieved the plausibility of the false banalities in which we all were raised and which only now show that they are even more dangerous than they are trite. One of these statements which to me always seemed to express succinctly at least one essential part of all political life and public concern is the statement which Clemenceau uttered during the Dreyfus Affair, when the very existence of the Third Republic was at stake and perhaps saved by Clemenceau. He said: *L'affaire d'un seul est l'affaire de tous.* The case of one single man is the affair of all. What does that mean?

Dreyfus was personally a man who never could have become Clemenceau's friend. He was, for all practical purposes, what might be called a "bad man." I mention this because I recently overheard a remark which is very characteristic of our present confusion. One man said to another: "But what are you complaining about? Up to now, no good man has been slandered or hurt." The point, of course, is not whether this is true or false, but that the law looks on good and bad men with an equal eye and that the reputation of a "bad man" is as important politically as that of any other. The General Staff of the French Army was sure that it could undermine the Republic by picking out a man with whom no one sympathized. And it might have succeeded if Clemenceau had not understood that the law looks on both good and bad with an equal eye, and that the breach of the law (or for that matter, the risking of civil liberties in order to trap a bad man) is necessarily the beginning of the end of civil liberties for all.

The final conflict will not be between Communists and ex-Communists. That conflict still belongs to the history of the factional strife within the Communist party that preceded its Bolshevization. It either is simply another stage of the disintegration of the so-called Left, or it is an ideological struggle among the makers of history who naturally have different ideas about the end which justifies their means.

As far as free society is concerned, there will be no final conflict with totalitarianism, because neither defeat nor victory will ever be conclusive. Victory by itself solves no problems, it only makes their solution possible. Moreover, totalitarianism has brought with it an entirely new form of government which as a potentiality and an ever-present danger is only too likely to stay with us from now on—just as other forms of government which came about in different historical moments have stayed with mankind regardless of temporary defeats—monarchies and republics, tyrannies, dictatorships and despotisms. It belongs to totalitarian thinking to conceive of a final conflict at all. There is no finality in history—the story told by it is a story with many beginnings but no end.

MEANWHILE, the dangers of the ex-Communists' role in social and public life are clear and present. They have told us quite frankly on what their claim to prominence is based, what their aim is and what methods they want to introduce. Their claim is based on the fact that they once have been Communists and therefore are trained in totalitarian thinking. Their aim is to apply this training to a new cause after the old cause has disappointed them. Their methods have,

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in some instances, consisted in arrogating to themselves the role of the police and almost always result in sowing mistrust between citizens whose "friendship," *philia* according to Aristotle, is the surest foundation of political life.

To this, we reply: We know that this century is full of dangers and perplexities; we ourselves do not always, and never fully, know what we are doing. We know that some of the best of us at one time or another have been driven into the totalitarian predicament. Those who have turned their back on it are welcome; everyone is welcome who has not become a murderer or a professional spy in the process. We are anxious to establish friendship wherever we can, and this goes for former Fascists or Nazis as well as it goes for former Communists and Bolshevists. The fact that one was formerly wrong should carry with it no permanent stigma.

But we cannot accept your claim, your aim, and least of all your methods. Your claim that one can fight the dragon only if one has become a dragon contradicts all our experiences and is hostile to our ultimate concern, which is to assert the humanity of men. Your aim, to make of democracy a "cause" in the strict ideological sense contradicts the rules and laws by which we live and let live.

America, this republic, the democracy in which we live, is a living thing which cannot be contemplated and categorized, like the image of a thing which I can make; it cannot be fabricated. It is not and never will be perfect because the standard of perfection does not apply here. Dissent belongs to this living matter as much as consent does. The limitations of dissent lie in the Constitution and the Bill of Rights and nowhere else. If you try to "make America more American" or a model of democracy according to any preconceived idea, you can only destroy it. Your methods, finally, are the justified methods of the police, and only of the police.

We know that it is dangerous and risky to live in freedom; we therefore are happy to pay taxes and train a special force among our citizens who are qualified to watch and who use their own methods which, however, we control. No private citizen has any right to arrogate to himself these highly specialized and limited functions.

Much as we desire to establish friendship with you, much as we are in sympathy with your experiences and frequently with your personalities, as long as you insist on your role as ex-Communists, we must warn against you. In this role, you can only strengthen those dangerous elements which are present in all free societies today and which we do not want to crystallize into a totalitarian movement or a totalitarian form of domination, no matter what its cause and ideological content.

FROM FRANCE

Murder Of a Village

Paris

THE Bordeaux trial was a national drama in the true sense. All month long the conscience of the French nation was frightfully torn between the demands of justice and concern over the danger to national unity.

Some nine years ago, on June 10, 1944, a company of SS men descended on Oradour, a peaceful French village near Limoges. The pretext was the capture of a German commanding officer by the *maquis* at a spot over thirty miles away. This armed company, with diabolical coldbloodedness, committed one of those war crimes such as would have made an ineradicable stain on the honor of a nation a century ago but in our gentle twentieth century seem almost to have become normal. Obviously six hundred and forty-two victims, more than two-thirds of them women and children, are but a handful compared with those slain at Rotterdam, Dresden or Hiroshima.

I shall not dwell on the horror of this village massacre, how the men were herded together in barns and coldly mowed down by machine guns, and the women and children thrown into the church, locked in, shot, burned alive. Scattered individuals were pursued through the fields and behind hedgerows by young brutes under orders not to let a single person escape.

But when we read in our newpapers the testimony of the pitifully few who survived that frightful day we could not believe it. How can men reach such a degree of insensibility and bestiality that they can fire point-blank upon sick people emerging from their beds, burn old men in bakeovens and murder children in full flight? Here is a dimension of the metaphysics of evil that is beyond our powers to comprehend. Perhaps one day we shall be enabled to understand all this, and to forgive. But to our poor human lights how can such crimes not cry to Heaven for vengeance?

It is easy to understand why for seven years the families of the victims have been clamoring for justice, for the punishment of the guilty. But how difficult it is, sometimes, to obtain human justice. After many investigations, only twenty-one of the sixty-five participants identified could be found; the rest had died or disappeared. And among these twenty-one were fourteen Frenchmen.

After defeating France, in 1940, Hitler made great haste to annex Alsace. The agony of this beautiful

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province, German in language and culture and French in patriotic sentiments, began again. (The people of this province have had to change nationality five times in the past eighty years.) One hundred and forty thousand young Alsatians were forcibly enrolled in the German army, some of them in the SS itself.

A few of the latter were at the village of Oradour. They fired upon their compatriots as the others in order not to be shot by their officers, who followed them with submachine guns pointed at their backs. Hence two difficulties at the trial: those who ordered the massacre and saw that it was carried out (the commanding and other officers) were absent. Hence only subordinates could be tried. Secondly—and this was a terrible problem—would the court have to pass judgment on both Frenchmen and Germans at once?

THE court did have one way out. A law of August 28, 1944 had provided that only "enemy nationals and non-French agents" could be prosecuted for war crimes. Thus the Alsatians would normally have come under a different jurisdiction than the Germans. But a law four years later designated as war criminals all individuals belonging to organizations declared criminal by the international military tribunal of Nuremberg—unless such individuals could prove that they had been enrolled by force and that they had not taken part in the war crime.

The object of this second law was to make sure that atrocities would not remain unpunished when there was danger of prosecutions' being dropped for lack of witnesses. That did not prevent the law from violating the rules of proof, personal responsibility and the non-retroactive character of penal statutes. It was, in fact, expressly drawn up to permit trials on the war crimes of Ascq and Oradour.

Bad laws always end by turning on their authors. In this case, the chink in the armor was article three, written with the Alsatians in mind. It covered us with ridicule, if not shame, in other countries since we sought to apply one law to Frenchmen and another to foreigners. What had happened to the lofty principles expressed in our constitution and in our declaration on the rights of man?

Article three specified that individuals not subject to the law of August, 1944 (that is, Frenchmen) *could* be included in a prosecution if personally they were co-responsible for, or accomplices in, a war crime. On this basis the authorities arrested the Alsatians, who by then had returned to their homes and had quietly resumed their former callings.

It was only among jurists that indignation was expressed when the 1948 law was adopted. Even the deputies from Alsace saw a loophole in the phrasing of the bill. All that was required was for the Guardian of the Seals to give the order for the case of the Alsatians to be disassociated from that of the Germans.

But this was not done. French governments have a habit of letting things take their course, of not looking to the future, of leaving it up to their successors to repair an evil.

Until the eve of the trial Alsace remained virtually silent. She had hoped that the authorities would realize before it was too late that a monstrous political error was about to be made. For in her twelve sons they were preparing to seat alongside the brutes from Hitler's SS, she beheld herself on trial.

No one fails to recognize that Alsace went through a Calvary of five terrible years. From 1940 on she was under German civil and racial laws and two Gauleiters. Everything that was French was systematically suppressed—language, flags, books. Compulsory labor battalions were decreed in 1941, conscription of all Alsatians held to be of the German race in 1942. In cases of flight or desertion the youth's entire family was held responsible. All these young men were subjected to execrable Nazi indoctrination and forty thousand of them actually died in the uniform of the enemy.

"All those who were drafted could have been at Oradour," the heads of the Alsatian Resistance testified at Bordeaux. "And they probably would have acted the same way as the few who were actually on the scene. They were already depersonalized, caught in relentless cogwheels, in a whirlpool. . . . They had all become robots."

Throughout the trial Alsace feared that she was being reproached for having allowed her sons to yield to force and become traitors to the nation. But no one in France proper had any idea of putting loyal, unfortunate Alsace on trial. The object was to save the principle of personal responsibility. The moment the soldier—even if he had been thrust into the army by force—found himself face to face with a woman or child he had been ordered to shoot, the problem began. And this was true whether the man was German or French. What should he do? Should he save his own life by killing the innocent or imperil his life in order not to commit a crime?

"The slaughter of the innocents," wrote Etienne Borne in an article in the *Monde* for January 27, "has been an abomination that cries to Heaven for vengence, from Herod's day to Hitler's. Whoever has taken part even if he is but carrying out orders with a heart quivering with terror, must be called to account or there is no longer any distinction between good and evil or civilization and savagery.

"For there is involved here the principle that a man is more important than the most pressing political interests or the most moving collective sensibilities. Are there, or are there not, circumstances that are so dia-

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bolically contrived that an honest man finds himself reduced to the role of a wholly passive instrument of the mystery of iniquity—limiting himself, to save his soul, to detesting inwardly the frightful act which he sees himself commit?

"If we must reach this desolating conclusion, as certain confessions at Soviet trials would seem to urge, human liberty is already vanquished and our profoundest hopes have lost their foundation. To maintain, instead, that responsibility and the necessity for a verdict exist, even under such horrifying extremities, is to affirm that grace, or free will, or the mind (the name given this final arbiter is unimportant) is always capable of bringing forth a heroic solution, of saving the honor of a man."

AS the trial proceeded the tension mounted. The Alsatians began to demonstrate in front of the war monuments to their beloved dead. The federal Parliament woke up to the fearful wound that was being inflicted on the living flesh of the French nation.

A first gesture abrogated the law of collective responsibility so that the original statute of 1944 alone was applicable. Normally this would have broken up the proceedings into two separate trials. But in order to forestall further delay and more public agitation, the new law provided that the trial would continue but that once the testimony had been completed Alsatians and Germans would have separate indictments, summations and verdicts. A lame solution not completely satisfactory either to those who demanded full justice without discrimination, or to Alsace, desolate to see her twelve sons in the same infamous dock as the Germans.

All this was apparent from what followed. On the one hand it was found that the trial had a very shaky foundation, built on a law which alone provided its justification. In demanding the death penalty for the German adjutant Lenz, the highest in rank among the accused, the attorney general was unable to supply proof that the man had actually taken part in the massacre. He had to content himself with saying "One thing is certain—Lenz was an adjutant in the SS."

On the other hand, several of the Alsatian soldiers, when they thought their forced induction into the Germany army automatically gave them immunity from punishable guilt, had admitted that they had been members of the execution squad and had heaped bundles of burning straw over those who had been shot. Were the Alsatians then to receive severe sentences and the Germans to be acquitted?

From all over Alsace protests again arose; demands heightened that the trial be interrupted. But the judges had to carry on to the bitter end. It was their duty, and their professional honor was at stake; they could not allow themselves to be influenced by threats and rumors about public opinion.

"Volunteers or conscripts, they still have blood on their hands," cried the government prosecutor in reference to the Alsatians, as he demanded the death penalty for one man who had voluntarily enlisted in the SS (whom no one in Alsace thought of defending) and sentences with hard labor for the others. "Say that we have not sentenced them to death," he said in conclusion. "That is what the accused have been pleading for since these hearings began. And yet there are still these six hundred and forty-two innocent victims. To declare that those before us are not guilty would amount to saying that the people of Oradour had not been exterminated, or that their village had not been ruthlessly destroyed." But the Alsatians again replied: coercion, enrollment by force, lack of criminal intention.

IN the end, two of the accused were condemned to death—the German adjutant because he had the highest rank, and the Alsatian SS volunteer. All the Alsatian conscripts were sentenced to forced labor and prison. The tribunal sought to uphold belief in a man's free will when he is confronted by conditions which call upon him to commit an inhuman act. The court is to be congratulated for its courage, for governments should not leave things up in the air.

Alsace herself did not accept the verdict of Bordeaux. As soon as the sentences were known, placards were posted everywhere, flags and tombstones were hung with crepe. A day of mourning was decreed, and there was a threatened strike by the mayors of the two affected French *départements* with the result that Parliament voted an amnesty and the thirteen Alsatian conscripts were freed and returned to their homes. The German adjutant and the Alsatian volunteer remained in their death cells in irons and in anguished uncertainty over their fate. Of such is the justice of men.

To conclude the drama I cite a letter that the Committee to Defend Conscientious Objectors addressed to the public authorities. Explaining why more and more men are becoming conscientious objectors in the face of the monstrous violence of mass conflicts, the signers say: "For who can guarantee that he will not find himself led, by virtue of a single command, to take part in other Oradours? The way total war is now fought, everything from the mass-bombing of cities and the machine-gunning of people along the highway, to the shooting of hostages, the torture of prisoners and the slow death of the concentration camp are accepted. These means are employed today by all belligerents, without exception, to sow terror abroad rather than to destroy the opposing army.

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Where then is the dividing line between what is 'morally' permissible and a war crime?

"Actually the answer is that an act is permissible if committed by the victor, forbidden if perpetrated by the vanquished. Why look for justice, still less for logic, in all this? Here is further proof: the assassins of Oradour are to be judged, and no doubt condemned, for not disobeying orders, while the same French military tribunals invariously hand out heavy and repeated sentences to conscientious objectors for refusing to kill in obedience to a command.

"This ridiculous contradiction shows strikingly the divorce between the universal common law and the arbitrary political law proper to each national sovereignty. It confirms the old adage: truth on this side of the Pyrenees, error on the other."

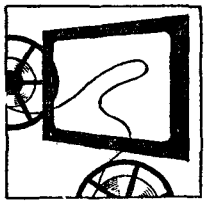
It is the organization of the world which must be changed. War itself was on trial before the tribunal of Bordeaux.

ROBERT BARRAT.

THE SCREEN

LOVE FINDS A WAY

WHEN the next history of motion pictures is written it will no doubt include a chapter on the new type of well-liked movie which consists of two or three short films served up in one package. The success of the three Maugham ventures into this kind of collection, and the current "Face to Face," as well as several foreign-language packages, has prompted more producers to go into the field.



The newest entry that ties three short stories into one film is a beautifully-made Technicolor item that should give a great deal of pleasure to its audiences. Other than their romantic themes, the only thing that links the tales in "The Story of Three Lives" is that several of its characters (although unknown to each other) are on the same ocean liner.

In the first tale, choreographer-artist-dance-director James Mason relives the experiences that explain why he never repeated one of his ballets after its successful opening night. Although somewhat statically directed by Gottfried Reinhardt, "The Jealous Lover" has been so well written by John Collier and danced by Moira Shearer that this vignette is absorbing from beginning to end. The costumes and sets were designed to enhance Miss Shearer's natural beauty; and though you may grow impatient with this girl whose love of dancing is so great she cannot stop even after being warned by her doctor that she must, you cannot help being moved by the extraordinary visual beauty of this story.

The next tale, "Mademoiselle," charmingly directed by Vincente Minnelli, is about a French governess (Leslie Caron) whose twelve-year-old charge wishes he were a man. One night, after a visit to an old woman (Ethel Barrymore) who he thinks is a witch and who almost proves the point with some of the most delightfully wacky dialogue you ever heard, the boy does turn into a man (Farley Granger) for four hours during which he falls in love with the governess. The final scene in this eerie whimsy, in which the boy *is* a boy again, is brilliantly calculated to send chills down your spine.

After this gay interlude, the third story, "Equilibrium," is very grim business indeed. In this screenplay by John Collier, powerfully directed by Gottfried Reinhardt, Kirk Douglas portrays a trapeze artist who knows he is better than the best but who feels responsible for the death of his former partner. Into his life comes a young woman (Pier Angeli) who wants to commit suicide because she too feels guilt—for the death of her husband in a concentration camp. The scenes in which Kirk teaches Pier to become an aerialist are fascinating; but the big finale in which these two, and a third performer, do their stuff high up in the air without a net below to catch them is almost unbearably exciting.

Sidney Franklin, who gave "The Story of Three Loves" such an excellent production, deserves a personal round of applause. His stories have an unusual preoccupation with death (the girl who dances in spite of her weak heart; the boy who wants to be older; the aerialists whose lives depend on balance, timing and not being afraid), but they are all handled with distinguished intelligence, imagination, and taste.

THE English have sent over a film that may annoy men but will win the hearts of women. Actually, the thing that may try men's patience with "The Story of Mandy" is also a basic weakness in the film's plot structure. Nigel Balchin and Jack Whittingham have written a good script from Hilda Lewis' novel, *The Day Is Ours,* but they should have seen when they complicated the story's main theme (getting a deaf mute child started on the road to some normalcy) by having the child's father more devoted to his own mother than his wife, they were getting started on another problem that they couldn't polish off in the space limits of one movie.

Phyllis Calvert and Terence Morgan turn in good performances as Mandy's mother and father; they are duly shocked, as any married couple would be, to dis-

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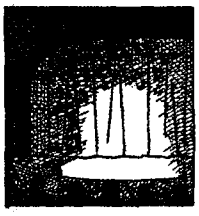
cover their daughter is stone deaf. Alexander Mackendrick, who is known in this country mainly for such delightful satires as "The Man in the White Suit" and "Tight Little Island," has directed this serious film very well, and Mandy Miller in the title role gives the kind of a performance that is inspired. The film is so well done that when she accomplishes her big victory, you feel that you too have spoken for the first time and you feel pretty proud of yourself.

PHILIP T. HARTUNG.

THE STAGE

PICNIC

IT is the supreme distinction of Mr. William Inge's world to exist solidly, as an imaginative fact, with more energy and vitality than that of any American dramatist of his generation. Neither deliquescent,



as is that of Tennessee Williams, nor shaped by Arthur Miller's blunt polemic rage, it is a world existing solely by virtue of its perceived manners —a perception which, as Mr. Lionel Trilling observed in another connection, is really only a function of love. The poetry, in Mr. Inge's plays, is all in the pity; he gives us the hard naturalistic surface, but with a kind of interior incandescence. What Elizabeth Bowen said of Lawrence defines Mr. Inge also: in his art, every bush burns.

At the center of "Picnic" is a sexual situation, common and gross, but orchestrated by the playwright with a subtlety of detail and a breadth of reference dazzling in their sensibility; the form, then, is that of a theme with variations. Into a community of women—widowed, single, adolescent, virgin—comes an aggressively virile young man. What the play studies, in all its disturbing ramifications, is exclusively his sexual impact on them: the initial movements of distaste and scorn, then a kind of musky stirring of memory and desire, followed by passion and willful hatred, subsiding in quiescence and resignation. It is a graph of emotion most beautifully and skillfully described, issuing in the simple wisdom of Mr. Inge's old spectator who, after this savage eruption of "life," can still see that "he was a man, and I was a woman, and it was good."

I have done the fine articulation of Mr. Inge's play the injustice of paraphrase. But nothing in "Picnic" lacks the sting of truth. All of its observation springs from some point of hard personal knowledge, some perception to which Mr. Inge has come by pain. His characters are small, but genuine in their pathos, most moving in their naked impotence before life. The script has, moreover, the benefit of a remarkable production, somewhat coarsened perhaps by Joshua Logan's strident direction, but otherwise limpid, sensual, grateful to the eye and ear.

Its second act concludes with a sustained, complex scene that is among the more notable achievements of the American theatre. It is a kind of ritual dance, involving the boy and girl only as sexual objects, but merciless in its exposure of the skein of envy, desire and psychic desolation which surround them.

Having committed myself to this degree, I feel ungrateful at expressing some fears as to the limitation of Mr. Inge's talent. He seems to me, at this juncture, an artist whose sensibility still exceeds the dispositions of his intellect—that is, his power to order and clarify experience is inadequate to his imaginative apprehension of it. Mr. Inge's "detachment," of which we hear so much, may be esthetically desirable, but I suspect a deeper search might reveal it as the characteristic attitude of a mind stunned, numbed by life. How else account for the curious inertia of Mr. Inge's plays, their lack of moral reverberation, their acquiescence in disaster? I offer these observations not as a reproach, but only as points of departure for an inquiry into the mysterious blemishes which mar this most remarkable American talent. (*At the Music Box.*)

WONDERFUL TOWN

MISS Rosalind Russell has reduced the critical fraternity to a state of gibbering glee; indeed, one of her most enthusiastic partisans, Mr. Brooks Atkinson, is currently denouncing the Constitution (doubtless to the horror of *The New York Times*) because it will not permit her election to the Presidency before 1956. That such a delay constitutes a cruel and unusual punishment is, I am sure, incontestable. It can only be rectified by a special legislation which will make attendance at "Wonderful Town" a condition of voting, like literacy. International relations should undergo a stunning improvement.

Never had it been my luck to see "the house fall in" until approximately 10:45, on the evening of February 26th, at the Winter Garden theatre, when Miss Russell tore into Leonard Bernstein's babbling inanity, "Wrong Note Rag." Earlier, she had done *that* conga with *those* Brazilian cadets. In one easy lesson, she told us of a hundred ways to lose a man. Glassy-eyed ("dig you later!") she went through a rhythmic little horror called "Swing." Throughout it all, she is leggy, irrepressible, deliciously astringent—ready to be tossed about by half of the Brazilian navy, ready to push a voice which my predecessor in these pages has called "no more than an amiable croak"

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through the vocal gamut from A to—well, isn't one note enough for you?

During the war, it was the custom for the infantry to pick, say, the girl you would most like to drive a tank over. Miss Russell is a fabulous paradigm of all those faceless, forgotten heroines—the girl you would most like to do *anything* with. She is, by my solemn, jaundiced troth, *that* good.

But "Wonderful Town" is not devoted to exhibiting just its one solid citizen. The book Joseph Fields and Jerome Chodorov have fashioned out of Ruth McKenney's stories expertly follows the two girls— Eileen with her talent for collecting men, Ruth with her typewriter minus the letter "w" (it fell off just after she finished her thesis on Walt Whitman)—among the perils and delights of a Greenwich Village which, pathetically, never existed. Betty Comden and Adolph Green have put precise, inventive lyrics to Mr. Bernstein's score—a score, by the way, which leaves little to be desired. I detect a fresh sensibility in Mr. Bernstein; he has moved beyond the brassy limits of his earlier work, and his talent is much freer, much more imaginative and graceful. An evening of his music encompasses wit, delicate sentiment and unabashed charm.

An opulent affair all told, with the silky texture, the verbal and visual humor of first-rate comedy. One hundred easy ways to lose a man? None of that. Overnight, Miss Russell brought the nine butchers of Broadway to heel. *"Wonderful!"* read the theatre marquee next morning, "*Wonderful*—Critics Unanimous!" (*At the Winter Garden.*)

RICHARD HAYES.

COMMUNICATIONS

"THE CONSERVATIVE CATHOLIC"

St. Bernard's, Ala.

TO the Editors: The efforts to set forth a valid "conservative Catholic" position have been largely fruitless. Invariably, the "conservative Catholic" manifests either an underdeveloped sense and understanding of the demands of the common good, or he presents an escape—a withdrawal into the narcissism of the past, awaiting perfect cause and irreproachable means. The latest "conservative" effort, that of Mr. Frederick D. Wilhelmsen, [Feb. 20, 1953] only fortifies this contention; it is a failure of the second order, one of escape.

In replying to The Commonweal's call for opposition, presumably Mr. Wilhelmsen recognizes this periodical as representative of the "liberal Catholic" attitude toward the twentieth century. But is there any correspondence between The Commonweal's position and that of Mr. Wilhelmsen's "liberal Catholic"? Does this "liberal" periodical really cut itself off from tradition and history and organicism and launch into irresponsible progress, planning, and the realization of that "intolerable social order" of which T. S. Eliot speaks, a secular monster which would be the antithesis of sanctifying the temporal?

The evidence to the contrary is conclusive. If the "liberal Catholic" (as far as this phrase can be used to describe the position of The Commonweal) accepts the necessity of the modern world it is only insofar as the modern world is upon him, not because it is some good which he must sustain in its present form. If he values the present, it is to the extent that he recognizes good, even *new* forms of good, in the modern world, despite its general dislocation and disintegration.

An "attitude toward the twentieth century" is Mr. Wilhelmsen's chosen battleground. But the first thrust reveals glaring imperfections in his combat tactics. Mr. Wilhelmsen makes a distorted and unsubstantiated condemnation of the "liberal Catholic" because, consenting to means not pristine, the "liberal Catholic" would enter into the context of his time. For himself, he suggests a univocal return to pre-Renaissance Christendom, as if the past did not have its own seeds of decay, and the present, in its understanding of the dignity of the person, for instance, had nothing to offer.

Mr. Wilhelmsen recognizes no resiliency in modern man which affords hope. He does not tell us how to act, to rebuild, or to convert. As if the twentieth century were a reversible coat, he would transpose a myth upon a world marked by a sober reality: Christianity no longer holds the field. "The fear of soiling ourselves by entering the context of history is not virtue, but a way of escaping virtue," Maritain tells us in *Man and the State*.

As Maritain has also recognized, in speaking of the peregrinal character of true humanism, the immediate world of which we individuals, as members of one community, are a part is most important. Its "passing" is a concentrated hour which determines eternity. To make the most of it, we must commit ourselves to it, recognizing what we are, to what we are called, the obstacles of the here and now, and then confront the hour, acting. The refusal to recognize the present or to engage in it is catastrophic—both for the person and for the community.

WILLIAM H. SLAVICK.

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Granger, Ind.

TO the Editors: I am an experimental biologist, which may explain (without, I hope, invalidating) my position in the current controversy. Against the conservative, who thinks that what worked once is good enough, I am a firm believer in experiment, both accidental and intentional, as a means of improving the quality of life. I am glad that I do not have to spend half my day chipping stone arrowheads for the hunting of my dinner, and I am duly grateful to the Stone Age liberals who did something about it.

Contrary to the liberal, however, I am convinced that some experiments fail (in my work, most of them do), that you do not have to continue an experiment once it fails, or even continue the trend of an experiment that fails. Liberals seem to despair of changing people's minds about an experiment they would like to see succeed. I do believe, however, that it is easier to change men's minds than man's nature.

History is replete with stories of nations that hitched their wagon to a falling star, notably empire-expansion. In our own era, the fate of many primitive races is illuminating. A number of tribes, totaling millions of people, have disappeared from the face of the earth because they made a simple change from food hunting to profit hunting. By the time the bottom fell out of the fur, copra, or ivory market, they had forgotten how to hunt, fish, or farm, and they quietly starved to death. Their mistake was not so much the choice they made, as the fact that they threw out the old before the new had proved itself. There is still time for us to avoid the same error, if only the liberals will let us.

My argument with the liberals is that they are much too conservative. The conservative wants to keep what was; the liberal wants to keep what is. The Pope, as he expressed it in his last Christmas message, wants to keep what works. He wants to keep what has proved its ability to develop the human person; he wants to avoid what has proved its ability to depersonalize; and he wants us to experiment with what might develop the human person further.

The Pope is convinced that the experiment of establishing a vast, highly-organized productive system has proved a failure from the standpoint of developing human personality. It was not an unjustified experiment, for it has produced real benefits, but it would be wrong to continue it now that we have seen its fatal consequences. The Pope calls for an experiment in direct, immediate, personalist action; he calls on investors and workers to try out ways of making a living which do not put a man at the mercy of huge anonymous organizations, either of capital or labor. He calls for the discovery of ways of making a living in which personal relationships and personal considerations will play the dominant role.

It doesn't matter whether these experiments resemble

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something previous or something present, so long as they resemble something human, so long as they profit by both the good and the bad experience of the industrial experiment, so long as they do not repeat the mistake of making economic relationships mechanical and impersonal.

The liberal needs to learn, somehow, what the scientific investigator learns by bitter experience: some things will not work even if everybody believes in them and the trend is all in their favor; some other things *will* work, even if nobody believes in them, provided the experimenters have the courage to keep going until they have proved their case. Part of the democratic faith is the belief that people can recognize their own mistakes. What we need are liberals who are genuine experimenters, rather than misplaced conservatives who merely prefer rolling bandwagons to stationary ones.

Human history is no simple biological experiment, but mankind still progresses very largely by the technique of trial and error. The conservative, however, will not admit trial, and the liberal will not admit error.

JULIAN R. PLEASANTS.

BOOKS

The Testimony of an Honest Man

SUCH, SUCH WERE THE JOYS. By George Orwell. Harcourt, Brace. $3.50.

By FRANK GETLEIN

AT first glance, the new Orwell may seem a grab-bag filled from his unbound works, put together now to take advantage of the market. If anything, the new book should send the market higher. It is excellent, and it is not the miscellany it looks. The ten essays were written over a dozen years, from before the last war against Germany to the writer's death in 1950. They cover his analyses of nationalism, anti-Semitism, England, writing, Henry Miller, and his memories of the Spanish war, the Near East, and, in the title essay, the life of a scholarship boy at a snobbish English preparatory school. Yet there is unity in these diversions; it comes from Orwell's graceful, intelligent writing; and it comes from the handful of "attitudes"—basic insights, really—which, shaped in part by the experiences here described, here turn back upon their origins such lights as they have struck.

The lights are considerable. Orwell is principally known in this country as a novelist, but he was essentially a prose writer, a nonfiction man. The two novels that made his American reputation were *Animal Farm* and *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. The basic insight of the former is political-historical, a brilliant grasp of the realities of the Russian revolution. In fleshing out this prose skeleton, Orwell became deeply involved with his animals, especially the faithful dray-horse who stood for the workers and peasants, the point of the whole upheaval, and, as occasionally happens, the allegory passed over the line into real fiction. When this happened, the political-historical point was somewhat softened, and, depending on why he reads novels, the reader rejoiced or mourned.

In *Nineteen Eighty-Four,* this change never took place; as a novel the work is decidedly inferior to *Animal Farm.* Nor is it as fully satisfactory in the political line as it could have been; the penetrating shaft of light directed at totalitarian life, and the wonderfully ingenious externalizations of the totalitarian spirit, are forever being set aside for the "story" elements: the beautiful mind stands still while the simulated heart performs.

In the honest prose of the present book, that conflict does not arise. And the true heart of Orwell reveals itself, not in the distracting fiction of the farmyard piece, nor in the conventional fakery of the book of the future, but in human pity for the suffering of the world and in controlled indignation at those who, the author believed, make the world what it is. It is a prose heart: the emotions are never for themselves, not merely parts of an aesthetic design; they support, illustrate, almost "prove," the case that Orwell is making about the real world.

To define Orwell's position in the real world, or the political world, requires a phrase like "democratic socialism," the one he uses himself. The phrase is inadequate; according to Orwell, any political position, certainly any active political position, brings with it a set of blinders and these he never wore. What Orwell was after was truth: not so much the philosopher's truth as the reporter's: what happened, to whom, by whom, where, when, why—what really happened. He learned and teaches that even journalistic truth is difficult to come by and extremely difficult to hold. He held.

Reading *Nineteen Eighty-Four,* it is impossible not to see that those fantastic inventions of the total state—the "memory hole," the "unwriting" of history, the scientific warping of the human personality—are more than logical projections of current trends in power politics; they are also formalizations of current, almost universal, practice. *Such, Such Were The Joys* details some of that practice in its native state, untouched by symbol-making hand. Brainwashing is now a fairly advanced study within the Soviet Union, but there have been amateurs of the art for centuries. As a child, Orwell tells us in the title piece, he learned that one could "commit a sin without knowing that you committed it, without wanting to commit it, and without being able to avoid it." Later, in the same world, he found "that one can do wrong without ever discovering what one has done or why it was wrong." These two points are among the more grisly horrors of *Nineteen Eighty-Four*: Orwell learned the first at the age of eight in

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the matter of bed-wetting, the second at ten in a boarding school campaign against "beastliness."

Orwell does not evade or gloss over the brute fact that his own political program—democratic socialism—has its unpleasant features, its occasional undemocratic necessities. More striking, he is one of the very few socialists with an accurate estimate of his goal: it is not Utopia, the new terrestial paradise, the millenium. He recognizes that the fundamental illness of the world is spiritual. His socialism aims only at a starting point for the real problems of our time and he knows it, but he makes a stirring defense of political materialism:

> The damned impertinence of these politicians, priests, literary men and what-not who lecture the working-class socialist for his "materialism"! All that the working man demands is what these others would consider the indispensable minimum without which human life cannot be lived at all. Enough to eat, freedom from the haunting terror of unemployment, the knowledge that your children will get a fair chance, a bath once a day, clean linen reasonably often, a roof that doesn't leak, and short enough working hours to leave you with a little energy when the day is done. Not one of those who preach against "materialism" would consider life livable without these things.

The root crime against humanity, in Orwell's book, is what he calls nationalism. The nation is any cause at all, specifically including "political Catholicism," and the crime is to deny the obvious fact in the name of the "higher truth," the cause. There is much of interest to Catholics in these essays. As a man who fought in Spain, for instance, he insists that the Catholic world press, by and large, made up out of whole cloth a version of the Spanish war totally at variance with the truth, but tailored to fit Catholic predispositions about Communism and "Catholic nations." As a literary man he discusses an aspect of Chesterton rarely mentioned in the mountain of G.K.C. studies produced by Catholic scholarship: Chesterton's anti-Semitism. This trait glares in book after book of Chesterton's, and the books are on the shelves, yet our criticism ignores it: a prime example, Orwell would say, of history un-written. As a socialist, he places the Catholics with the fascists, the reactionaries, the defenders of organized injustice, and explains the union as one of people who have something and mean to hang onto it.

This is a ruthlessly honest book and to many it will be disturbing. But Orwell's attitude itself is a fact to be examined and the book should be required reading for the conscious Catholic.

Some Tired Businessmen

AMOS BERRY. By Allan Seager. Simon and Schuster. $3.95.

By GEORGE MILES

THE vitiating effect of materialism or industrialism has, of course, been described and decried many times and in many places. But it is not a common starting point in contemporary American novels. Mr. Seager, who teaches at the University of Michigan and who has written two other novels, *Equinox* and *The Inheritance,* has created in this book characters and scenes that demonstrate the dehumanizing effects of organization, technique, mass production. He has depicted successfully the outlines of a big business in a small midwest town, the social habits which stem from it and some supplementary incidents which further illuminate the stunted life of a commercialized community.

All of this, of course, is revealed as the story of Amos Berry proceeds from the mouth of his son. In the beginning the boy tells of his strongest image of the father—as he taught how to catch a forward pass; then he reveals that his father is a murderer and in succeeding chapters in a series of flashbacks he unveils the stages which led to the crime.

Amos Berry was office manager of a large company owned by a former classmate whom Amos had befriended in school days. He was an unusually knowing and decent office manager whose contributions to the company routine were sensible but easy things, whose home life was an automatic activity and whose social interests were confined to golf and drinks at the country club. His wife, bored and unsatisfied with her position, and his son who wanted to be a poet, not an athlete, were unaware of an undercurrent of sensitivity in him which led him finally to an elaborate plan for murder—the dispassionate shooting of his employer and friend in protest against "the system," the mechanization of life and people.

The beginning of this novel is excellent. In a short, natural prelude the son, who had served in the occupation army in Germany and who came to understand the nature of poverty and dignity among the homeless Germans, places himself and sets the background with strong, nostalgic images. The incidents which precede the murder have relevance and effectiveness. Mr. Seager penetrates deeply and accurately the personalities of his characters as they sit at a barbecue given by Walt Rickart, owner of the company. This man blusters through the party wearing a chef's hat and apron giving a good representation of that class of persons who are abysmally ignorant, completely oblivious of their own shortcomings, but able to make money as easily as most men make mistakes. Mr. Seager realizes the accent and the substance of the conversation; he recaptures the humorless humor, the arrogant, uncontested generalities, the awkward pauses, the unintended insults and the intended ones.

In other places the writer describes a stag party and the sophomoric lust of the business men who attend it. He pictures a political convention and its hotel room activities vividly and forcefully. A notably strong scene is that of a pol-

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itician turning on a smile in three parts for the three sections of the audience.

Whenever Mr. Seager paints people in their worst colors his pictures are true and convincing. When he mocks the stereotyped symbols of wealth and happiness in a mechanized society he is swift and accurate. But somewhere in this novel which has so many valuable marks, credibility disappears. It is not possible to believe that Amos Berry, a good fellow who works on the books at the office, who plays golf and drinks with the boys, who buys the kind of house his wife wants but not the kind he wants, who teaches his son how to catch a forward pass, can suddenly turn against the system, buy a farm and grow his own food, calmly calculate the steps needed to kill his employer, and, finally, shoot the man in secret, and run away. As a realistic creation this fails; as a symbol it is inappropriate and unconvincing. Nor does the manner in which the murder is revealed, by the chance presence of his son, detract from the sense of unreality.

Moreover, Mr. Seager, who avoided sentimentality throughout the story, indulges, at the finish, in an extended literary name-dropping device when father and son, united in the knowledge of the hidden crime, discuss "how it all began." First there was Descartes. "Cogito, ergo sum." And, in the style of those patronizing radio dialogues by mental scarecrows ("Didn't Jefferson say . . . "), Hegel, Newton, Locke, Einstein, all make guest appearances. All of it is unnecessary and helps to put the finishing blow to a book which gave signs of being a work of exceptional quality.

It should be made clear that Mr. Seager's prose stands many levels higher than that found in most of the novels published these days, and that his knowledge and insight are strong weapons. But in this book the artificiality of the structure which he set out to decorate ultimately shows through the many virtues.

Story of a Lost Shepherd

THE FAIR BRIDE. By Bruce Marshall. Houghton Mifflin. $3.

By JEAN HOLZHAUER

THIS novel is both a departure and a return, differing from Mr. Marshall's earliest and best loved books in the toughness of its setting and theme, but still recognizable as the work of the writer who gave us Father Malachy and Father Smith.

Its virtues include a three-dimensional picture of the Church's position during the Spanish Civil War, a study of one of those pure-hearted but erring clergymen beloved of Mr. Graham Greene (*The Power and the Glory*), a kind of torchlight procession of the Civil War soldiery of all factions, and some undiluted asides on the accoutrements of Catholicism ("This chapel was the only part of the Cathedral which didn't look like a joss house").

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The conspicuous defects are an over-contrived plot and the characterization of the hero, who shares with Fathers Malachy and Smith a tendency to melt into treacle and holy water. In the midst of violent brutality, the Reverendo Don Arturo Carrera y Granja is prone to such reflections as, "War wasn't the worst thing in the world; the worst thing in the world was the hole in men's hearts."

Out of the Spanish War and its aftermath, conceivably, could come a "Catholic novel" on the grand scale. One feels that Mr. Marshall, in his careful attempt to explore all facets of the prism, has intended something like this, and one regrets sincerely that the total effect is so much like that of a John Gunther essaying a *War and Peace*.

The book concerns a priest whose loss of faith and departure from the clergy coincides with the outbreak of the war. His uneasy divorce from religion, based on disgust with his fellow Catholics and on a vague scientism, is no guarantee of safety among murderous anti-clerics, however, and there are chase sequences in which he becomes reminiscent of all of Mr. Greene's hunted men.

He falls in love with a dance hall entertainer and works for a while with the Communists before he regains his faith and is arrested while celebrating Mass. How he is saved is a complicated story involving a pair of relics, a finger of St. John of the Cross and the long arm of coincidence.

Partisans

AMERICA AND THE INTELLECTUALS—A Symposium. Partisan Review Press. $1.

By JOHN E. CONNOR

THIS symposium, inevitably, has its limitations. Chiefly it suffers from having been compiled by literary intellectuals who equate the two terms "intellectual" and "writer." Within its limitations, however, it is a gem—tightly packed, full of lights, many-faceted. Since it is so largely concerned with discussing how intellectuals feel about America, it is of particular interest to those of us who have been discussing how Americans feel about intellectuals.

The book is a collection of twenty-five brief essays which appeared in issues of *Partisan Review* last year in response to four questions the editors had phrased about the impact of mass culture upon the élite. One of the limitations of the series is implicit in the phrasing of the four questions. Twelve of the essays are literary criticism with passing—very passing—consideration of non-literary art forms and of other aspects of our culture. Seven more are sociological criticisms, and nearly all of these are permeated by literary considerations. Four—by Hook, Howe, Lerner, and Schlesinger—are politico-economic in viewpoint. Margaret Mead has written as an anthropologist, and Reinhold Niebuhr has contributed a somewhat irrelevant but extremely powerful statement that might best be called religious, "seriously spiritual." The influence of the physical scientist on "our country and our

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culture" is manifest in almost every essay and is clearly primary in many, but no physical scientist has been considered an intellectual. Nor has any painter, any politician, any musician, any mathematician—to name just a few categories—contributed.

Even within the field of literary and social criticism there is, I believe, a second limitation. There are no radical statements. Norman Mailer tries to be radical but seems tinny. (Mailer and Sydney Hook contribute the only mediocre articles.) Irving Howe contributes a good left-wing article but it is too bemused to be radical. Reinhold Niebuhr, C. Wright Mills, Irving Howe himself, Joseph Frank, Philip Rahv, and Arthur Schlesinger, Jr. are all worried about maintaining an open society, an atmosphere in which the dissenter may freely dissent. In *America and the Intellectuals,* however, no one dissents much. There is no contribution in the vein of David Dellinger's *Alternative,* Dwight MacDonald's *Politics* or Dorothy Day's *Catholic Worker*. Unlike the first limitation, this one is implicitly recognized and ascribed to the present small influence of radical thought in this country.

The right wing is well represented. Sydney Hook (who may well be a more important enemy of freedom than McCarthy in that his influence is felt in *The New York Times* rather than in the Chicago *Tribune*) presents his usual case for shooting the Communists. Happily he is alone.

Once it is conceded that *America and the Intellectuals* is concerned with only one or two kinds of intellectual, it is possible to call attention to a hundred delightful and penetrating sentences:

"The ordinary bookshop today, stocking nothing that isn't current or surefire, is only a little more depressing than certain avant-garde bookshops—where one asks in vain for any writer who is not properly modish, and where (for all that) there is seldom any changing of the garde."—Louis Kronenberger.

"Even the Stalinists, though they thunder against American jazz and cowboy suits for children, can in the end only kidnap our vulgar mythology for their own purposes. The sense of an immortality here and now, so important to American culture and parodied in Forest Lawn Cemetery, finds its Soviet counterpart in the mummification of Lenin or the touting of Bogomolets; while our faith in progress and achievement finds an ersatz in the Five Year Plans and the statistics doctored to assist belief."—Leslie Fiedler.

Leslie Fiedler also develops a provocative hypothesis on the concern not only of the intellectual but of the mass-man for America. "Among us, nothing is winked at or shrugged away; we are being eternally horrified at dope-addiction or bribery or war, at things accepted in older civilizations as the facts of life, scarcely worth a tired joke. Even tax evasion dismays us! We are forever feeling our own pulses, collecting statistics to demonstrate the plight of the Negro, the prevalence of divorce, the failure of the female organ, the decline of family Bible reading, because we feel, we *know* that a little while ago it was in our power, new men in a new world (and even yet there is hope), to make all perfect. How absurd of our writers to have believed that only they were pained at the failure of love and justice in the United States! What did they think our pulp literature of violence and drunkenness and flight was trying symbolically to declare? Why did they suppose that the most widely read fiction in America asks endlessly, 'Whodunnit? Where is the guilt?'"

And Jacques Barzun, among others, calls attention to what this reviewer finds the most depressing aspect of mass culture: "the compulsiveness of scientific method is irresistible: before a movie or an article or a cover-design is (as we significantly say) released, its form, tone, length, design, subject, and vocabulary are put through the collective, fretful mind of a staff of experts for an obsessive perfecting worthy of a better cause."

This is a fine book worthy of wider circulation than it is likely to receive. It could have used contributions by Harold Urey, William Groper, Paul Douglas, Roger Sessions, and Norbert Weiner. On the other hand Lionel Trilling, Philip Rahv, Jacques Barzun, Horace Gregory, William Phillips et al. are rich fare—especially here.

The Highway

U.S. 40. By George R. Stewart. Houghton Mifflin. $5.

By JOHN COURNOS

TO the present writer, who has walked many a Roman road in England, usually overgrown with grass, and has seen where many a bit of the old road has been worked over and incorporated into a modern macadam road fit for motoring, this large, handsome, copiously illustrated volume, subtitled "Cross Section of the United States of America," holds a singular interest. Just think of a road which extends from the Atlantic to the Pacific, a road which is at present over three thousand miles long and still subject to change, a road which begins informally at Atlantic City and ends in San Francisco. Variously called "U.S. 40," "U.S. Highway 40," and "U.S. Route 40," it is continuous, but by no means straight, and, while not planned as a unit in the beginning, it has utilized fragments of old roads, some of them famous, to become what it is, the longest road anywhere.

U.S. 40 traverses twelve states and the corners of two others; it spans the Delaware River, the Susquehanna, skirts the Potomac, crosses the Ohio including its tributaries, Monongahela and Wabash; the Mississippi at St. Louis; the Missouri twice. With each change of scenery the author offers us a superb photograph, giving the effects of a running panorama, often impressive, but sometimes depressing, because of the vastness of flat treeless country, the monotony of plains, the absence of small but intimate scenery such as France and England offer.

Only in the East, and when the Rockies are reached, do we have relief from the endless sameness

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that marks a magnificent road which for the most part, to use the author's own terminology, dominates rather than is dominated by the landscape through which it passes. So much of it is deforested, so much mutilated by advertising signs. The author (in one instance, from the air) admires "the grand sweep of the country," minus the blemishes which are the work of man. But when all is said and done, this road, the author's, has the virtue of all great roads, for its most important freight is "neither household goods, nor livestock, nor munitions of war—but ideas!"

AN APPEAL

The Maryknoll Sisters' Clinic reports that the numbers of homeless refugees have greatly increased in Pusan, South Korea; "the poorest of the people are dying of starvation." Funds for $5 food packages for the Clinic's "Adopt-a-Family" program, and donations of any amount, may be sent to: War Relief Services, National Catholic Welfare Conference, 350 Fifth Avenue, New York 1, N. Y.

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THE 1953 NATIONAL CATHOLIC ALMANAC. Compiled by The Franciscan Clerics of Holy Name College, Washington, D.C. St. Anthony's Guild. $2.50.

EVERY year the Franciscans publish a new edition of this almanac, which is of special value for anyone who has to deal regularly with matters of Catholic history, doctrine, practices, etc. Aside from the standard features, there is a list of appropriate special articles in every new volume. Several well known writers have contributed to the current edition. Father Merton has an essay on "The Apostolate of Prayer and Penance," Father Considine, of Maryknoll, has one on "American Catholic Foreign Missions" and J. Edgar Hoover has prepared a piece on the FBI.

The index to the volume gives a good indication not only of its contents but of the widespread activities of American Catholics. There are, for instance, articles on the Retreat Movement, Catholic Action, the Catholic Press and Catholic Education. All the major addresses given by the Pope in 1952 are to be found here in their entirety, as well as the American Bishops' annual statement. There is data on the hierarchy, the religious orders and the organization of the Church. The book should be especially useful for editors in the secular field who often find themselves in search of authoritative Catholic information. Aside from its use as a reference, the almanac is valuable for the intrinsic merit of some of its theological and philosophical articles, which are written by eminent authorities.

REVIEWERS

Frank Getlein is executive secretary of the Spaeth Foundation in New York City.

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MAN THE SUBJECT

Throughout the issues of The Commonweal, week by week, the persistent subject is contemporary man. He is the subject, more than the ideologies, political systems and social situations which impinge upon him. The focus of our articles, editorials and various sorts of reviews is man—fallen yet redeemed.

The extent to which this is true is well brought out in this current issue, whether it be in Hannah Arendt's discussion of the character and role of the ex-Communists here in the United States or in Robert Barrat's analysis of the Bordeaux war trial. Concern for man is likewise uppermost in the following articles which are scheduled to appear in The Commonweal in coming weeks.

The Stalin Myth **by Waldemar Gurian**

Francois Mauriac **by Donat O'Donnell**

New Religious Art **by Anne Fremantle**

The Coronation **by Donald Attwater**

Academic Freedom **by George N. Shuster**

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